



## SCUBA Diving



SCUBA divers in Crater Lake National Park face special challenges. For the dedicated diver, however, the lake also offers a unique experience. Crater Lake is the deepest lake in the United States and one of the clearest fresh water lakes in the world.

Keep in mind that Crater Lake is accessible for divers only from early July to late September due to our extreme snow conditions. Earlier or later dives may be possible, but cannot be guaranteed due to the variability of our weather.

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### Dive Tables

The lake level averages 6,173 feet above sea level, so high altitude dive tables should be used in planning your dive. Most divers use the 8,000 foot table.

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### Access to the Lake

Crater Lake is accessible for diving only hiking the Cleetwood Trail, located on the north side of Crater Lake. The Cleetwood Trail is 1.1 miles long and descends 700 feet to the lake surface. You must be able to carry all your equipment down and up the trail. Wheeled vehicles are prohibited. Restrooms are available at the top and bottom of the Cleetwood Trail but there are no food or drinking water facilities.

You may dive in Cleetwood Cove by the lake level gauge and from Wizard Island, staying at least 50 feet from the boat docks and mooring facilities. Wizard Island is only accessible by taking one of the

concession-operated boat tours. A ranger-naturalist narrates the tour, so plan on arriving at Wizard Island about forty minutes after departing from the Cleetwood Cove dock. Contact Xanterra at (888) 774-2728 for tour prices, schedules and reservations. Prior arrangements must be made with Xanterra, as space on the tour boat is limited. Stays on Wizard Island last 3 to 6 hours, depending on the tour. No one is allowed to stay on the island overnight. Except for a composting toilet, there are no facilities on the island. If weather threatens, boat tours may be shortened or cancelled.

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### In the Water

You must carry out everything that you carried in. Minimum impact visiting is a requirement. Private boats and rafts are not allowed on the lake. Only tour boats and research vessels are permitted. Crater Lake is preserved as a scenic and scientific wonder, not as a recreation lake. Because the water is quite cold (temperatures below the surface are consistently in the upper 30's), a good quality, .25-inch full wet suite or a dry suite is required.

No solo diving is permitted under any circumstances. A "diver down" flag is required. No collecting of rocks, plants, or other features is permitted. No spearfishing is permitted. The nearest full decompression chamber is more than 300 miles from the park. All divers must be certified NAUI, PADI, or similar-type divers and must bring proof of certification with them. Air refills are not available in the park. The nearest facilities are in Klamath Falls or Medford.

## Exploring Deep Blue

An average annual precipitation of 67 inches, primarily in the form of snowmelt, keeps Crater Lake at a fairly constant depth. At its deepest point, Crater Lake is 1,943 feet deep, making it the deepest lake in the United States and one of the deepest in the world.

Surface temperatures in Crater Lake vary from 32° to 65°F. The average summer temperature is 50° to 58°F. Below 260 feet, the temperature is a constant 38°F.

Once under the surface, you will find Crater Lake varied in appearance. As in any natural body of water, you may encounter sediments, algae, and suspended materials. Phytoplankton and zooplankton live in the lake, along with crayfish and two species of fish (kokanee salmon and rainbow trout), which were introduced in the late 1800s. Moss grows along the caldera walls to depths of more than 400 feet.

